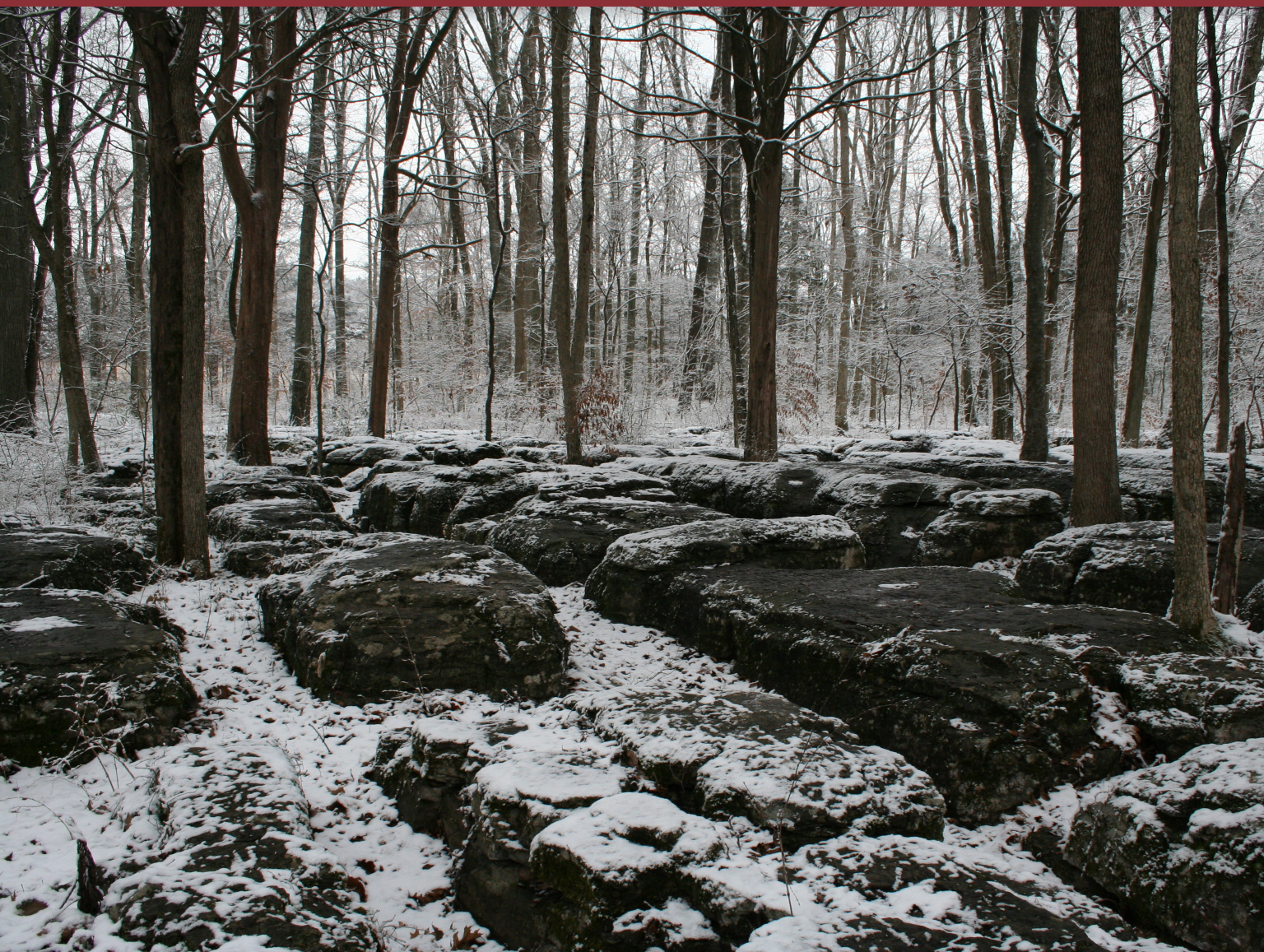




# Foundation Document Overview

## Stones River National Battlefield

Tennessee



### Contact Information

For more information about the *Stones River National Battlefield Foundation Document*, contact: [stri\\_superintendent@nps.gov](mailto:stri_superintendent@nps.gov) or (615) 893-9501 or write to: Superintendent, *Stones River National Battlefield*, 1563 N Thompson Ln, Murfreesboro, TN 37129



## Purpose



*STONES RIVER NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD  
preserves, protects, and promotes  
understanding of the significant sites  
and historic events associated with the  
Battle of Stones River, fought during the  
American Civil War.*



## Significance

Significance statements express why Stones River National Battlefield resources and values are important enough to merit national park unit designation. Statements of significance describe why an area is important within a global, national, regional, and systemwide context. These statements are linked to the purpose of the park unit, and are supported by data, research, and consensus. Significance statements describe the distinctive nature of the park and inform management decisions, focusing efforts on preserving and protecting the most important resources and values of the park unit.

- The Battle of Stones River secured middle Tennessee, its vital transportation network, and its rich agricultural lands for the Union, while providing a much needed strategic victory that bolstered Union morale as the American Civil War moved into 1863.
- The Union victory at Stones River strengthened political support for President Lincoln and the Emancipation Proclamation, which went into effect on January 1, 1863. The proclamation signaled a major shift in American Civil War goals—from a fight to preserve the Union to a struggle for freedom.
- The Hazen Brigade Monument, one of the oldest intact American Civil War monuments, was built on the Stones River battlefield in 1863 by soldiers who served under Col. William Hazen to memorialize the brigade's actions and losses.
- After the Battle of Stones River, Union forces, with the help of formerly enslaved laborers, constructed Fortress Rosecrans, one of the largest Civil War earthen fortifications, to serve as a major supply depot for both the Chattanooga and Atlanta campaigns. Stones River National Battlefield protects surviving portions of these earthworks.
- Stones River National Cemetery was one of the first national cemeteries authorized by the federal government. The national cemeteries were a response to military and civilian concerns with the way in which the nation cared for war deaths.
- The freedmen's settlement known as Cemetery, established following the American Civil War on the site of the Battle of Stones River, existed until the designation of Stones River National Battlefield in 1927, and beyond. Some park neighbors are descendants of those early community members. Some of the freedmen who lived there played an integral role in the building of Stones River National Cemetery.
- Stones River National Battlefield protects cedar glades, a specially adapted plant community, including some plants known to occur only within a few select locations within Rutherford County, Tennessee.



## Fundamental Resources and Values

Fundamental resources and values are those features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, sounds, smells, or other attributes determined to merit primary consideration during planning and management processes because they are essential to achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining its significance.

- **Battlefield Landscape**
- **Stones River National Cemetery**
- **Commemorative Landscape and Monuments**
- **Fortress Rosecrans**
- **Archeological Resources**
- **Museum Collections**



Stones River National Battlefield contains other resources and values that may not be fundamental to the purpose and significance of the park, but are important to consider in management and planning decisions. These are referred to as other important resources and values.

- **Appropriate Recreational Opportunities**
- **Cedar Glades**



## Interpretive Themes

Interpretive themes are often described as the key stories or concepts that visitors should understand after visiting a park—they define the most important ideas or concepts communicated to visitors about a park unit. Themes are derived from—and should reflect—park purpose, significance, resources, and values. The set of interpretive themes is complete when it provides the structure necessary for park staff to develop opportunities for visitors to explore and relate to all of the park significances and fundamental resources and values.

- **Theme 1:** Stones River was one of the major Civil War battles in size, complexity, and long-term results.
- **Theme 2:** The Battle of Stones River significantly changed the course of the Civil War by shifting momentum from the Confederate Army to the Union Army and providing a timely boost for the Union cause.
- **Theme 3:** The battle profoundly affected the lives of countless people—civilian as well as military.
- **Theme 4:** The rural landscape of Stones River battlefield – especially its terrain, vegetation, and features – notably influenced the battle.
- **Theme 5:** Stones River National Battlefield represents an important early effort in the movement toward battlefield commemoration in the United States.
- **Theme 6:** The Confederate army's withdrawal from the area after the battle allowed Union forces to build Fortress Rosecrans, a major supply/logistics/transportation base, and to affect Murfreesboro throughout the rest of the Civil War and Reconstruction.



## Description

Stones River National Battlefield commemorates the Battle of Stones River—an important three-day American Civil War battle fought between December 31, 1862 and January 2, 1863, within the Central Basin of Tennessee, near the city of Murfreesboro. During this pivotal confrontation, nearly 23,500 soldiers were either killed, wounded, or captured out of the more than 81,000 engaged. Confederate forces commanded by Gen. Braxton Bragg eventually relented, leaving Stones River in control of Union forces, commanded by Gen. William S. Rosecrans. For the Union army, the rate of casualties was the highest of any battle in the war. For the Confederate army, due to the massing of Union artillery, the casualty rate was second only to the Battle of Gettysburg.

The Union victory boosted morale in the North, strengthened President Lincoln's political decision to issue the Emancipation Proclamation, and permitted the construction of Fortress Rosecrans, the largest earthwork fortress built during the Civil War. In 1863, the Hazen Brigade Monument was built and dedicated to Col. William Hazen's Union Brigade. Stones River National Cemetery was authorized the following year as part of a national cemetery movement to honor Union dead.

In addition to historical resources, the park protects several cedar glades featuring an indigenous plant community found only in Rutherford County, Tennessee. Stones River National Battlefield also provides a haven for people seeking an outdoor experience. Recreational activities available at the park include auto touring, biking, bird-watching, fishing, hiking, jogging, dog walking, nature walks, interpretive programs, and picnicking.

